

May 2001

Shellfish Connections

A Quarterly Newsletter
from
The Office of Food Safety & Shellfish Programs

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Special Insert: HACCP class registration form



Growing Area News

Dungeness Bay Closure Response Provides an Example of Interagency Cooperation

In April of 2000, approximately 300 acres in Dungeness Bay were reclassified from approved to prohibited for commercial shellfish harvest. This was in response to elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria detected at sampling locations near the Dungeness River mouth and within the inner portion of the bay. In April 2001, another 100 acres was also reclassified from approved to prohibited.

The classification downgrade triggered the formation of a closure response group to determine the actions needed to restore water quality within the bay. Representatives on the group include the shellfish industry, local residents, Clallam County government, the Clallam Conservation District, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Battelle Laboratories, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team, and the State Departments of Health, Ecology and Fish and Wildlife.

Because the Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge is located in Dungeness Bay and there are populations of marine mammals and waterfowl, wildlife was initially perceived to be the major source of bacterial contamination. In an effort to address the question about wildlife, the response group initiated a series of studies designed to determine whether bacterial pollutants were entering the bay from the watershed or were originating in the marine environment. These studies drew directly on the resources of the agencies and individuals within the response group.

The Department of Ecology had targeted the Dungeness River and its tributaries for a total maximum daily load

(TMDL) study prior to the Dungeness Bay downgrade. With assistance from response group members, the Department of Ecology was able to tailor the design of their TMDL study to provide valuable stream segment pollution information on the Dungeness River and several of its tributaries. The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe funded a circulation study, performed under contract by private consultants, to determine water flow patterns in the outer and inner portions of Dungeness Bay. The US Fish and Wildlife Service provided and analyzed census data on marine wildlife populations. The State Department of Health provided historical marine water quality data and assisted in the collection and processing of water samples from freshwater and marine monitoring locations.

The TMDL study documented significant loads of bacteria in several tributaries of the Dungeness River that were subsequently transported into the bay by the river. The circulation study in Dungeness Bay demonstrated how certain tidal conditions were capable of moving virtually all of the Dungeness River discharge into the inner bay. The examination of water quality data and wildlife population data showed clearly that while wildlife populations in the marine environment had declined, bacterial contamination in the marine waters had increased. The information from these studies produced a compelling argument that bacterial pollutants were originating within the watershed and being transported into the marine environment by the Dungeness River. It was possible to complete this work because of the cooperation and coordination of the members of the Dungeness closure response group.



Did you get a packet in the mail?

WAC Revision

In early March, we mailed to all stakeholders and interested parties a packet of information about the recent revisions (effective March 8) to Chapter 246-282 WAC. The packet contained information explaining the changes, a matrix of the significant differences, revisions to the model ordinance and a copy of the new WAC. You should review this information to become familiar with what has changed. If for some reason you did not receive a packet, please contact our office at (360) 236-3330.

Enforcement Update

Recent License Actions:



Best Fish LLC, owner *M. Brendan Mahaffey*,
WA-1290-SS

Notice of Intent to deny license and assess civil penalties appealed. Stipulation, Agreement and Order completed on 19 March 2001. Order revokes shellfish operation license through 31 March 2003. Civil penalties assessed in amount of \$2,250.00.

Mandarina Canadian Enterprises, owner *Thomas Hui*, not licensed

Notice of Intent to deny shellfish operation license application and assess civil penalties mailed on March 8 2001. Alleged violations include multiple events of operating without a license, mistagging, and failure to have a required Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Plan. Civil penalties are assessed in the amount of \$5,150.00.

Harvesters Please Note!

Change in Renewal and Expiration Dates for Harvester Classification

If you are licensed as a Harvester (you can tell by the suffix on your license number, i.e., WA-9876-HA), the effective dates of your license will soon change.

License year for a Shellfish Operation License and Certificate of Approval has traditionally been from October 1st through September 30th for all license types. The recent revision of Chapter 246-282 WAC changed the license timeframe for the Harvester (HA) classification. The new license year for HAs will be from April 1st of every year through March 31st of each year.

To accommodate this change, there will be a transition period for all HAs. During the next renewal season (license year 2001 – 2002), HAs will renew for a “special” license, which will only be effective for six months – from October 1, 2001 through March 31, 2002.

Because HA licenses will be effective for only half a year, the renewal fee will be half of the annual fee, or \$125.

Then, in early January 2002, all licensed HAs will receive a packet to renew their shellfish operation license. Once renewed, these licenses which will be effective for a full year, April 1st through March 31st. The license fee will be the full amount, or \$250.00. From that point forward, renewal packets for HAs will be sent in January of each year.

Please note all other shellfish operating license effective dates will remain the same! However, if you are currently licensed as a Shellstock Shipper (denoted in the license number as WA-9876-SS) and are considering changing your operating license category to Harvester, you need to be aware of this transition.

Classes Offered

Need Help with HACCP or SSOP?



Our office is offering a shellfish Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) class July 19th and 20th. The training will be held at the DOH office located at 7171 Cleanwater Lane, building 4, in Tumwater. Attendance of this class will satisfy the HACCP training requirement mandated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for those firms who identify HACCP controls. The cost is \$50.00 per person, which includes training manuals. A registration form is included in this newsletter.

Also being offered is a one-day shellfish standard sanitation operating procedures (SSOP) class November 16th. The training will also be held at the DOH office located at 7171 Cleanwater Lane, building 4, in Tumwater. This class will focus on the 8 points of sanitation monitoring requirements mandated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for those firms who process molluscan shellfish. The cost of this class is \$25.00 per person.

For more information on either class contact Jessie DeLoach, Lead Inspector, at (360) 236-3302 or Cathy Barker at (360) 236-3303.

Inspectors' Corner



Wet Storage Information On Tags

Wet storage is a temporary storage of shellstock harvested from growing areas classified as Approved, or Conditionally Approved. The shellstock is placed in containers or floats in natural bodies of water or in tanks containing natural or synthetic seawater and is the last body of water a shellfish product is suspended in before it is processed or shipped. The requirements for wet storage are found in Chapter VII.01-.03 and Chapter X.05 of the 1999 National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance and under WAC 246-282-042 Wet Storage Permit.

Wet storage systems need to have complete harvest record keeping and tagging of wet stored shellstock. Accurate records provide the information the department and the industry needs to initiate a thorough trace back system in the event of illness.

All wet storage requires a *Wet Storage Plan* and must meet the standard tagging requirements in the Model Ordinance in addition to the requirements below:

On Shore Flow-Through System using Natural Waters: If you wet store using a Flow-Through system you will need:

- ◆ *Wet Storage Permit*
- ◆ *Harvest Site Approval* for the wet storage site natural waters
- ◆ Record keeping also needs to include the location of the wet storage site; the date's product is placed in and taken out of wet storage
- ◆ Tagging information must identify the original harvest location and date

Natural Waters: If you wet store in classified growing area waters outside of the original growing area and harvest site you will need:

- ◆ *Harvest Site Approval* for the wet storage site natural waters
- ◆ Record keeping also needs to include the location of the wet storage site; the date's product is placed in and taken out of wet storage
- ◆ Tagging information must identify the original harvest location and date

Natural Waters: If you wet store in classified growing area waters within the original growing area, this is not classified as Wet Storage, but you will need:

- ◆ *Harvest Site Approval* if shellstock are moved to a different location within the same growing area
- ◆ For shellstock moved from the original harvest site, but still within the original growing area, record keeping should also include the location of the wet storage site; the date's product is placed in and taken out of wet storage
- ◆ Tagging information must identify the last harvest location and date

Imported Shellstock: If you wet store shellstock harvested from another state in Washington States natural waters, Flow-Through or Recirculating system you will need:

- ◆ *Wet Storage Permit* for the Recirculating or Flow-Through system
- ◆ *Harvest Site Approval* for the wet storage site natural waters
- ◆ Tagging information must identify the original harvest location and date, the initials of the state/province, and the wet storage location and period of time the shellstock was wet stored. This statement must be capitalized and on the tag "This Product is a Product of (Name of State) and was wet stored at (Facility Certification number) from (date) to (date)" Retention of the tag listing the state of origin must be retained for 120 days.

On Shore Recirculating Systems: If you use a Recirculating system using natural make-up water or an Artificial Water System you will need:

- ◆ *Wet Storage Permit*
- ◆ *Harvest Site Approval* for natural make-up water added to system (if applicable)
- ◆ Record keeping also requires the location of the wet storage site; the date's product is placed in and taken out of wet storage, and the water quality testing results
- ◆ Tagging information must identify the original harvest location and date

For additional information, contact Jessie DeLoach at (360) 236-3302.

Calling All Shellfish Operators



(or at least trying...)

At the Office of Food Safety and Shellfish Programs, we have dedicated ourselves to protecting public health. We recognize that the effort to keep the public safe is a collaborative one and that, in partnering with us, shellfish industry members play a key role in protecting public health. Thus, when communication between business owners and our office breaks down, public health is threatened.

- Recently, we have experienced difficulty reaching owners and managers of licensed shellfish businesses by phone, particularly with phones at locations where caller id has been set up. Our phone number appears as "unavailable" on phones with call blocking devices and we are unable to reach these locations. Additionally, our phone system restricts us from hanging-up and redialing using the (* 82) function to display our number.
- It has also come to our attention that several businesses do not have an answering machine on their contact phone. It is essential that our office have a way to notify shellfish companies of growing area closures, recalls, or other important events. For this reason, businesses are required to monitor their messages daily while they are actively operating - operating being defined as harvesting, processing, buying or shipping shellfish.

Effective March 8, 2001, Chapter 246-282-014, Washington Administrative Code, Operation Provisions (6) states that:

The designated person in charge of a shellfish operation must have a functioning telephone message device or service issued by a telephone service provider to the owner(s) or person in charge. The person in charge must:

- (a) Monitor the device or service each day that the shellfish operation is active, regarding messages from the department about

emergency closure of harvest areas or recall of shellfish products; and

- (b) Notify the department whenever the telephone number used for this purpose changes; or
- (c) Maintain another equivalent method of contact with the department approved in the plan of operations.

In order to better serve shellfish companies and protect public health, we are asking that all businesses currently licensed for operation through the Office of Food Safety and Shellfish Programs provide a phone number with an answering machine to your assigned inspector. Keep in mind that caller blocking interferes with our ability to contact you, and refrain from using it with phone numbers that are used to communicate with our office. Remember, by providing us with this information you are working to protect the public and your community.

Staff Changes

Cari Franz-West was hired in January to work as a Public Health Advisor in the Shellfish Program. She will primarily be out in the field surveying licensed commercial shellfish harvesters, shippers, and processors. Cari had been working for the Department of Fish and Wildlife for the past four years in their Fish Health Laboratory performing viral, parasitological and bacteriological assays on salmon and trout samples. Prior to WDFW, Cari was employed at the Public Health Laboratory in Seattle as a microbiologist for five years where she worked in many different sections of the laboratory including the Biotoxins and Water Bacteriology labs.



Biotoxin Update

DOMOIC ACID

Last Quarter 2000

Domoic acid test results for the fall and early winter of 2000 were quite low. Only one sample of razor clams in October from Kalaloch was above single digit, at 10ppm. Therefore, the fall/early winter recreational razor clam season was able to proceed without interference from domoic acid closures. Long Beach and Twin Harbors each, had 10 open days, Copalis and Mocrocks each, had five days open, and Kalaloch, finally, was able to have 15 open days. Domoic acid tests of commercial Dungeness crab from the outside coast reflected the low levels found in the razor clams. All the samples, with the exception of four individual crab, had test results of no toxin detected. The four "high" results were each less than 1ppm.

First Quarter 2001

The trend of single digit domoic acid levels in razor clams of last fall, continued through January and February 2001, allowing for additional opportunities of razor clam sport harvest. In February, Long Beach, Twin Harbors and Kalaloch each, had four additional harvest days. Mocrocks had two additional harvest days. Domoic acid levels in crab remained low as well. March saw a reversal, with toxin levels going up to double digit levels, placing the planned April sport razor clam harvest in doubt. The highest toxin levels in March were at Twin Harbors (24ppm) and Long Beach (22ppm). The bloom also produced results of 1ppm in mussels at Bay Center and Tokeland, inside Willapa Bay. The bloom also affected Oregon beaches (Clatsop Beach – 3/30/01 = 27ppm).

PSP

Last Quarter 2000

The bloom in the coastal estuaries that began in September continued through October and into November. Fortunately, only mussel samples from the mussel cages exceeded the closure limit. Consequently, the commercial harvest areas were not closed.

The annual closure for the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the coastal beaches that usually is lifted on October 31 was extended, due to the continued PSP activity in the Straits.

For most of Puget Sound, the high toxin levels of August-September began a downward trend during the last quarter of the year. However, there were a few areas such as Liberty Bay in Kitsap County that saw new bloom activity during the period. The period also continued to be problematic for many geoduck tracts. There were a total of eight geoduck tract closures in the last quarter of the year 2000.

First Quarter 2001

Typically, PSP toxin levels continued a downward trend through the first quarter of 2001. This trend that began in December 2000, prompted the lifting of closures in several parts of the state. The PSP levels in razor clams on the coast remained stable, between 40 and 60 micrograms. In Puget Sound, general closures were lifted in Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Skagit and Whatcom Counties.

PSP Trend Analysis

Our office recently completed an analysis of PSP data collected since 1990 at sites managed by DOH as part of the Sentinel Biotoxins Monitoring Program. The analysis was done for the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program (PSAMP) and was presented as a poster at this years' Puget Sound Research Conference. You can receive an 8.5 x 11 sized copy of the poster by contacting Tim Determan at (360) 236-3316, email tim.determan@doh.wa.gov, or PO Box 47824, Olympia, WA 98504-7824.

Growing Areas Threatened by Pollution

The Department of Health recently released a list of 13 commercial shellfish growing areas that it considers threatened with harvest restrictions or closures due to sanitary conditions. Ten of the threatened areas are in Puget Sound, two are along the Straits, and one is in Willapa Bay. In portions of four of the 13 areas, harvest restrictions are already completed or pending – Henderson Inlet, Dungeness Bay, Filucy Bay, and Oro Bay. The other nine areas on the department's "early warning system" list are threatened with closures or restrictions. In several of the listed areas, only a small part of the water body is threatened.

In each identified area, the pollution is categorized as non-point pollution from stormwater, farm animal waste, on-site sewage systems, and / or wildlife. Identifying the actual sources of non-point pollution can be difficult because they are usually low-level, widespread, and intermittent. A map of the "threatened" shellfish areas may be viewed at:

www.doh.wa.gov/Publicat/2001_News/Images/beaches.bmp. The 13 listed areas are:

- Dungeness Bay and Pysht in Clallam County
- Port Gamble Bay's Cedar Cove in Kitsap County
- Annas Bay and lower Hood Canal near Belfair in Mason County
- Naselle River in Pacific County

- Amsterdam Bay, Filucy Bay, and Oro Bay in Pierce County
- Samish Bay in Skagit County
- Henderson Inlet and Nisqually Reach in Thurston County
- Portage Bay in Whatcom County.

The Department of Health monitors pollution sources and water quality in 83 commercial shellfish growing areas and many public shellfish beaches around the state. Most of the areas have excellent sanitary conditions.

The early warning system is designed to alert shellfish growers, local communities, state agencies, and Tribes about worsening sanitary conditions and the need to investigate and correct problems before closures are required. Since the inception of the early warning system five years ago, 29 different shellfish areas have been identified as threatened. Eight have suffered partial or full closure.

DOH will be working with local governments, Tribes, and other state agencies to conduct follow-up investigations to identify the non-point sources responsible for the problems. In nearly all situations, only local governments and the Department of Ecology have authority to enforce non-point pollution water laws and regulations.

For more information, contact Bob Woolrich at 360 236-3329.



Calendar of Events

HACCP class, Tumwater Thursday, July 19th & Friday, July 20th

Independence Day, state offices closed Wednesday, July 4th

SSOP class, Tumwater Friday, November 16th

Staff Contacts:

Jennifer Tebaldi
Office Director.....(360) 236-3325

Bob Woolrich
Classification/Water Quality(360) 236-3329

Judy Dowell
Certification/Biotoxins.....(360) 236-3313

Stan Iwagoshi
Tribal Coordinator(360) 236-3315

Other Numbers:

General Information (360) 236-3330

FAX (360) 236-2257

Internet Address
www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf

Beach Closures

PSP Hotline.....(800) 562-5632

PSP Web....www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm

Department of Health
Office of Food Safety & Shellfish Programs
7171 Cleanwater Lane, Building 4
PO Box 47824
Olympia WA 98504-7824



The Department of Health (DOH) will present the next shellfish HACCP class July 19 & 20, 2001 in Tumwater. The registration fee is **\$50** per person. Advance registration and payment must be received by July 2, 2001. Advance registration is required in order for us to purchase the right number of training manuals for the class. Space is limited, based on the size of the training room, so registrations will be accepted in order of date received. (Priority will be determined by postmark.) *This class is intended for owners and employees of DOH-licensed molluscan shellfish operations. Persons interested in HACCP for other seafood products probably should attend a more general class.*

For more information about shellfish HACCP classes contact Jessie DeLoach at (360) 236-3302.

**Shellfish HACCP Class Registration
July 19 & 20, 2001
Olympia, Washington**

Participant(s):

Name _____ Title _____

Shellfish operation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone number _____ Fax number _____

Registration check enclosed for \$_____ (**\$50** per person)

Make check payable to **DOH Shellfish Programs** and mail with completed registration form to:

**Shellfish Programs HACCP Class
PO Box 47824
Olympia, WA 98504-7824**

Advance registration required by **July 2, 2001**.